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ABSTRACT

A study examined low-socioeconomic status (SES) urban children's ways of interpreting traditional skills-based literacy instruction in kindergarten and first grade. Subjects, 35 randomly selected children from three inner-city schools, were tested for entering and end-of-first-grade knowledge of six domains of written language. Subjects' scores on two standardized achievement tests were also collected. Twelve children were randomly selected from the sample for close observation over 2 years in their classrooms. Qualitative and quantitative analysis revealed four patterns of success/nonsuccess in literacy development within the classroom context: (1) the "independent explorer" children who began kindergarten with the "big picture" of written language and successfully interpreted the skills-based instruction while engaging in numerous self-directed explorations of print; (2) the "curriculum dependent" children who did not have the "big picture" of written language from the start and exhibited major mismatches between their understandings and those required by the curriculum; (3) the "passive nonweavers" who failed to actively construct relationships between the many skill activities required of them; and (4) the "deferring learner" who moved from a knowledgeable, active stance to a passive one after confronting mismatches between her knowledge of print and the curriculum. (Six tables of data are included; 40 references are attached.) (RS)

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PATTERNS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE AT LITERACY LEARNING AMONG LOW-SES URBAN CHILDREN IN TRADITIONAL SKILLS-BASED KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE CLASSROOMS

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PATTERNS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE AT LITERACY LEARNING AMONG LOW-SES URBAN CHILDREN IN TRADITIONAL SKILLS-BASED KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE CLASSROOMS

ABSTRACT

This study examined low-SES, urban childrens' ways of interpreting traditional skills-based literacy instruction in kindergarten and first grade. Thirty five randomly selected children from three inner-city schools were tested for entering and end-of-first-grade knowledge of six domains of written language. Their scores on two standardized achievement tests were also collected. Twelve children were randomly selected from this sample for close observation over two years in their classrooms. Qualitative and quantitative analysis revealed four patterns of success/nonsuccess in literacy development within the classroom context: (a) The Independent Explorer children who began kindergarten with the 'big picture' of written language and successfully interpreted the skills-based instruction while engaging in numerous self-directed explorations of print; (b) The Curriculum Dependent children who did not have a 'big picture' of written language from the start and exhibited major mismatches between their understandings and the those required by the curriculum; (c) the Passive Nonweavers who failed to actively construct relationships between the many skill activities required of them; and (d) the Deferring Learner who moved from a knowledgable active stance to a passive one after confronting mismatches between her knowledge of print and the curriculum.

Patterns of Success and Failure at Literacy Learning Among Low-SES Urban Children in Traditional Skills-Based Kindergarten and First Grade Classrooms

Literacy achievement, over all, among children from low-income, inner-city families consistently falls below national norms. At grade 11, according to NAEP (1988), the average proficiency for these students falls at about the seventh-grade level for all students nationally. Drop out rates among these children have risen to nearly one million students per year (Smith-Burke, 1989). More often than not, they go on to swell the welfare and jobless ranks. While many factors influence the lives of at-risk learners, literacy problems account for much of their difficulties, and for many of these students, problems with reading and writing are evident from the beginnings of elementary school.

This study focuses on this seemingly intractible problem by studying poor, urban children learning to read and write in traditional, skills-based classrooms--predominant in innercity schools (Smith-Burke, 1989). Operating from a transactional theory of language learning (Rosenblatt, 1978; 1989), we chose to explore how the learners themselves go about understanding, or making sense of, their formal instruction in reading and writing within the classroom context. We hoped to identify factors which may account for both success and failure within this population. Viewing through a transactional lens, we sought to understand how

instruction, the learners' responses and actions, and the social and cultural contexts of learning events changed and were changed by each other.

This focus on the learners' interpretations of beginning literacy instruction adds to the research into low-SES children's literacy learning. Previous research has centered mainly on (a) related sociological factors (Ogbu, 1985; Trueba, 1989); instruction and the effects of grouping practices, instructional materials, and social contexts on learning to read and write (Au, 1980; Bloome & Greene, 1982; Collins, 1981; Griffin, 1977; Meyer, Hastings, Wardrop & Linn, 1989), or literacy learning within family contexts (Taylor & Dorsey-Gains, 1988). While identifying and describing important factors for low-SES children, these studies have not focused on the learners' perspectives and how they go about understanding and making sense of their instruction.

Investigations which have centered on learners (Bussis, Chittenden, Amarel, & Klausner, 1985) have studied children learning to read and write but have not measured nor accounted for entering written language schemata, as this one does. Studies which have focused on children's linguistic proficiences and described the cultural contexts of their literacy experiences at home (Ferriero & Teberosky, 1982; Harste, Burke & Woodward, 1983; Heath, 1983; Teale, 1986; Wells, 1986) have not provided an account of the relationship between early (before school) development and the processes of learning to read and write.

In order to observe and interpret transactions involving literacy learning in classrooms, it is necessary to know the learner. Rosenblatt (1989) points out that Pierce's (1931-1935) triadic model of semiotics (a conjoint linkage among sign, object, and "interpretant") firmly grounds language and the processes involved in speaking, listening, writing, and reading in the individual's transactions with the world. The individual, she goes on, makes "sense of a new situation or transaction by applying, reorganizing, revising, or extending elements selected from ... personal linguistic-experiential reservoir" (p. 156).

Previous research has provided some information on the linguistic-experiential reservoir's of low-SES children as they enter formal instruction. We have learned that it is experience with written language rather than socioeconomic status which is the operative factor governing knowledge about print (Harste, Burke, & Woodward, 1983). Further, we know that urban poor children's knowledge, or hypotheses, about written language often do not match beginning literacy instruction, reflecting relative inexperience with print (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982). Although lower-income families engage in many and varied literacy events, the nature and duration of the events differ from other populations. In particular, storybook reading accounts for only a small portion of the literacy activities in low-SES families (Heath, 1983; Anderson & Stokes, 1984, Teale, 1986).

Since researchers have documented storybook reading as the source of important written language knowledge such as story structure schema (Stein, 1982), written textual features (Pappas & Brown, 1988; Purcell-Gates, 1988; Sulzby, 1985a), and conventions of print (Holdaway, 1979), this discrepancy in experience appears critical. In fact, Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) studied successful inner-city children learning to read and write and found that their families included books as well as other reading and writing events in their daily lives. The effect of entering knowledge on success in beginning literacy instruction is documented by Meyer, et al. (1988) who found that end-of-year scores for low-SES children were significantly related to entering scores on the Wide Range Achievement Test.

A transactional view of language learning implies that what happens in school contexts is just as important as understanding the learner. Research has revealed that actions taken by parents and teachers often overcome literacy learning problems for low-SES children. Direct parent-teacher contact and out-of-the-ordinary academic assistance by either parent or teacher appears to result in better-than-expected reading achievement (Chall & Snow, 1988; Goldenberg, 1988). Thus, it appears that both entering knowledge and in-school experiences affect the degree of success with learning to read and write for low-SES children and must be accounted for in studies searching for ways in which to improve the success rate of these children.

This study expands the current research in several important ways. This is the first study to attempt to document learning to read and write in school from the child's perspective beyond the case study level. Also, no other study has carefully documented low-SES children's entering knowledge of written language across several domains and also followed those same children through the first two years of schooling. Finally, this study utilized a multi-site, ethnographic design in order to expand the generalizability of the qualitative results.

Method

The design of the study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in order to account for learners' ways of interpreting instruction in relation to their entering-kindergarten and end-of-first-grade knowledge of written language.

Informants

Thirty-five children were randomly selected from three kindergarten classes in three inner-city schools in a large midwestern city. Twenty-four of the children were African American and 11 were Caucasian, reflecting the relative ethnic composition of low-income school children in the city. Income level was determined by eligibility for the federal free-lunch program. Sex was balanced across and within the schools with the exception of one school which had only five boys eligible for the sample.

From this sample of 35 children, 12 were randomly selected (two girls and two boys from each school) for close longitudinal

observation. These children are referred to as the "focal children." Eight of these children were African American and four were Caucasian.

Schools and Instructional Programs

The three schools involved in this study, while part of the same school system, differed in both the ethnic characteristics of their school populations and features of their reading and writing curricula. School A served a predominantly African American neighborhood. Most of the families qualified for the free lunch program though their incomes indicated that they were "just beginning to make it." School B served African American children who lived in public housing projects adjacent to the school. Nearly all of the children were from families supported by public assistance. School C served an urban Appalachian community, most of whom were supported by public assistance. The beginning reading/writing curricula in all three sites fell into the category of "traditional, skills-based." In kindergarten, letter names and sounds were taught first, with simple sight words following in two of the three sites. First grade instruction emphasized sight words, letter patterns, and sounding-out rules. Children read simple stories in their basal which illustrated use of the above. Workbooks and worksheets predominated in both kindergarten and first grade. The curriculum in each of the sites is summarized in Table One.

Insert Table One About Here

Procedures

The research team consisted of two investigators and two research assistants. Each site had a permanent researcher assigned to it, with the two research assistants sharing responsibility for School C during the first year of the study while one of the research assistants continued at the site for the second year of the study. Researchers entered the sites at the beginning of the kindergarten year and acted as participant observers for two weeks, allowing the children to become familiar and comfortable with them.

Following the initial get-acquainted weeks, researchers administered the tasks designed to measure knowledge of written language to each of the 35 children. The tasks assessed knowledge of (a) intentionality of print; (b) story structure; (c) written narrative register; (d) the alphabetic principle; and (e) concepts about print (Clay, 1979). A sixth measure of 'concepts of writing' emerged and was formalized from the data collected for the 'alphabetic principle' measure. Order of task administration was counterbalanced across all subjects and sexes with the exception of the Intentionality task, which was administered first in all cases, and the spelling task, which always came after the writing task (these were pieces of the measure of alphabetic principle

knowledge).

Close observation of the focal children began after the Written Language Knowledge assessment. The researchers assumed a participant observer stance with the emphasis closer to the observer end of the continuum. This enabled us to gather information about how these children learned in typical classrooms, necessitating the decision to affect instruction and learning processes as little as possible. The researchers focused on one focal child at a time, recording all behaviors and talk. Field notes were structured to record both the instructional context and the learner's activities within that context over the observational period. Each focal child was observed for approximately one hour each week for kindergarten and two hours twice a month for first grade during literacy instruction. Remote microphones were attached to the children under observation during the second year of the study to record their spontaneous talk during literacy events. All artifacts, including any writing or reading materials present in the instructional context or produced by the focal children during the observational periods were collected. Researchers probed the children under observation with open-ended requests such as "What are you doing now?" and "Tell me about this work."

Because this was a multisite ethnography, procedures were developed to insure preservation of site uniqueness and allow for cross-site comparison (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The research team

met weekly to share observations, develop common strategies for data collection as new questions emerged, and help each other focus and refocus the study. Data management procedures were developed jointly, and data analysis proceeded as a result of cross-site searches for patterns. Visits were made once a year across sites to facilitate group discussions and as a check on researcher interpretations. Each researcher visited each site with the assigned researcher during these visits. Observations were made by both researchers at the site, and the resulting field notes were shared and added to the data.

Home visits were conducted for most of the focal children. Making at least one visit per child and often more, the researchers talked with parents and occasionally grandparents about literacy related activities.

At the end of each year, descriptions of the instructional program and the classroom were shared with each teacher for comments and refinements. Our descriptions and interpretations of the children's individual interpretations of instruction were shared with the teachers only at the end of the study, again to lessen the impact of our presence on the instruction.

Close observation of the focal children ended in the spring of their first-grade year, and the researchers again administered the Written Language Knowledge Tasks to all 35 of the children in the sample. The school district routinely administered standardized tests at the end of both kindergarten and first grade,

and the results of these tests were added to the data.

Analysis was based upon data which included: (a) 613 hours of observation; (b) 119 hours of transcription of audio recordings; (c) 1,293 artifacts, 986 of which were workbook pages or dittos; (d) results of the pre- and post-administrations of the Written Language Knowledge tasks; (e) standardized test scores from the Metropolitan Achievement Test and the California Achievement Test; (f) informal teacher comments and assessments of children's progress and ability.

Instruments

Written Language Knowledge Assessment. The array of tasks measured children's knowledge of several different domains of written language which have been shown to be related to success at learning to read and write. This array of tasks was developed to provide a more in-depth view of written language schemata than can be gathered from the relatively limited and simplistic assessment available from standardized readiness tests. Task administration took place individually over three testing sessions per child, each session lasting approximately 20 minutes.

The assessment included five tasks. The Intentionality task addressed whether or not children understood that written language is a symbol system with meaning accessible to them (Harste, Burke & Woodward, 1983). Story Structure Knowledge was assessed with both a production and recall task. The Written Narrative Register task measured children's implicit knowledge of lexical and

syntactic features typical of written narrative (Purcell-Gates, 1988). Learner knowledge of the Alphabetic Principle was assessed with three measures: (a) an environmental print reading task presented in three gradually decontextualized formats (Goodman, 1984), (b) a writing sample, and (c) a spelling test of 10 words. Clay's Concepts About Print test (Clay, 1979) was administered to measure the children's understanding of the conventions of written language. A sixth measure, Concepts of Writing arose from the analysis of the alphabetic principle measures and was developed to reflect the children's understanding of writing as a system (i.e. ranging from lines bordering the page, to pictures, to word-like forms.)

Data Analysis: Quantitative

With the exception of the Concepts About Print test, which was scored and interpreted according to Clay's standardized procedures, and the Written Register task, which was scored according to procedures devised for an earlier study of well-read-to children (Purcell-Gates, 1988), the Written Language Knowledge tasks were analyzed according to procedures devised by the researchers as they examined the data. Reliability of scoring within each task protocol was accomplished by having all three members of the research team score all of the responses. Disagreements were discussed until total agreement was reached. A Total Written Language Score for the pre and post tests was computed by summing the final scores for each of the six measures. Complete

descriptions of these scoring and analysis procedures as well as a more detailed description of each task are provided in the project final report (Dahl, Purcell-Gates & McIntyre, 1989).

Data Analysis: Qualitative

Throughout the two-year period, field note data were reviewed and discussed for emerging patterns of the children's ways of interpreting instruction both within and across sites. At the end of the first year of the study, we analyzed the data for an interim report (Dahl, 1989; Purcell-Gates, 1989). For this analysis, we created a version of what Miles and Huberman (1984) call an unordered meta-matrix, a procedure for assembling descriptive data from each of several sites in a standard format. From this first step of inclusion of all relevant data, we moved to partitioning the data further and clustering data that fell together. Resulting codes were then used for all field note coding.

At this point, we also created a standard procedure for inferring hypotheses about reading and writing held by each child. To do this, each behavior which appeared motivated by a developmental belief about (a) "what do I know about written language?" (for kindergarten data); and (b) "what do I do in order to read and write?" (for first grade data) was noted by the researcher who then inferred the underlying hypothesis(es). Each behavior, context for the behavior, and hypothesis was then shared with the other researchers for agreement, and codes for the resulting hypotheses which both spanned the sites and were site-

specific were established. Field note data were then coded for hypotheses and recorded by site and by time of year. Finally, this information was collapsed across sites, retaining site-specific data when relevant.

These procedures were repeated at the end of the second year of the study, once for the second year only to capture first-grade-specific information and again for the two years of the study to draw all of the data together.

We next constructed a scatterplot of hypotheses over time, with the two years broken into three sections. This move was made to enable us to "see" all of the cases in two-dimensional space and make more precise determinations regarding hypothesis clusters (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Each researcher then developed a data narrative (Dobbert, 1982) for each focal child, utilizing field notes and artifacts when needed. These narratives summarized the behaviors and beliefs of each focal learner during kindergarten and first grade. We carefully read the narratives, noting when each child showed evidence of each of the beliefs, when and why the children showed critical moves in their development, and how their behavior related to their instructional environments. Common patterns of behavior across children and sites were then established.

Learning Paths. We termed the results of this analysis "Learning Paths." Learning Paths trace the interpretations that these children made of reading and writing as processes and allow

us to see how children function across time. The paths described the evolution of reading and writing behaviors for this group of learners and helped us envision how their developing hypotheses and understandings unfolded. A Learning Path was defined as a narrative account of a set of behavior patterns which express the evolving hypotheses about written language (and specifically about reading and writing) for a group of learners. A path thus accounted for learner belief as demonstrated by consistent behavior, and it described the critical moves or patterns of change that allowed us to see learners' ways of functioning with respect to reading and writing.

RESULTS

Quantitative Results

The results of the first administration of the Written Language Knowledge Tasks at the beginning of kindergarten indicated both a range of performance across all of the children and an overall restricted knowledge of the different aspects of written knowledge accounted for in the tasks (see Purcell-Gates, 1989 for more detail and discussion of pretest results). The final administration of the tasks at the end of first grade revealed significant growth in most of the areas tested (Matched-Pair Wilcoxin $p<.05$ except for Written Register). These results, along with the mean scores attained on each of the standardized tests administered by the school district, are presented in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 About Here

Relationships Between Entering Knowledge Assessments and Learning Paths

Of particular interest at the onset of the study was the relationship between the children's schemata about written language at the beginning of kindergarten and the degree of success in learning to read and write in school. The Written Language Knowledge tasks measured knowledge in six domains, and the paths were aggregates of learner behaviors and patterns of sense-making about reading and writing. Four distinct paths emerged: the Independent Explorer Path was characterized by independent investigation of print, the Curriculum Dependent Path by learner inexperience with written language and reliance on instruction, the Passive Non-Weaver Path by minimal engagement during reading and writing instruction and failure to weave literacy concepts into an understanding of process, and the Deferring Learner Path by a shift away from the learner's own written language knowledge. Table 3 lists the average scores in each area of written language knowledge by path membership.

Insert Table 3 About Here

The measure which seemed to differentiate most between the successful and less successful learners was the Intentionality task. Analyses showed, with one exception, that the successful children, the Independent Explorers, held a more developed view of the semiotic nature of print and its various functions and purposes. They indicated during the pretest administration that print "said" something meaningful and that it was used for transactions in the world such as "at the bank" and "on games to tell you what to do." The less successful children, the Curriculum Dependent Learners, could only indicate that print consisted on "letters" or "numbers" which existed in school to be "learned."

Qualitative Results

The four distinct learning paths, which emerged during the final analysis of data, reflected cross-site groupings of learner responses to skill-based reading and writing instruction across time. Table 4 lists path membership by site.

Insert Table 4 About Here

As can be seen, the paths included learners from each of the sites, with no pattern emerging indicating a site/ path correspondence.

As data narratives, the four paths describe interpretations of instruction from the learners' perspectives and include representative vignettes for each learner group. Also included are descriptions of entering written language knowledge and degrees of

success at literacy learning.

The Independent Explorer Path

The Independent Explorer Path primarily included patterns of self-sponsored reading and writing activity during the initial two years of schooling. Behavior patterns and hypotheses for this group indicated that they appeared to understand the intentionality of written language, were able to interpret instruction successfully, and were successful in constructing their own knowledge about reading and writing within the context of the skills-based curriculum. This path included learners who were relatively knowledgeable about written language at the beginning of kindergarten and particularly active in investigating the processes of reading and writing on their own.

Three characteristics of this learning path were distinctive: (a) the extent and nature of entering written language knowledge; (b) the nature of self-sponsored explorations of print both within and beyond the skills-based curriculum, and (c) the ability of these learners to adjust reading strategies for differing reading contexts.

At the beginning of kindergarten the learners within this path consistently indicated that they expected print to be meaningful and functional. They appeared to believe that when they wrote and/or read something, the print conveyed meaning. While their understanding of story structure and sound/symbol correspondences were somewhat limited, they clearly entered schooling with an

intense interest in learning to read and write.

Pretest data demonstrated fairly extensive experience with written language for this group. Maya's initial writing sample provides a case in point. In response to the charge to write her name and anything else she could, she listed names of various family members, some written from memory and others written while experimenting with sound/symbol correspondences. She attempted to spell Carla by saying each sound slowly and writing Cale (see Figure 1). Thus, in addition to demonstrating her understanding of intentionality, Maya revealed an implicit grasp of the alphabetic principle.

Insert Figure 1 About Here

Children in this group engaged in numerous and regular self-sponsored explorations of reading and writing both within daily instruction and beyond the classroom curriculum. Throughout kindergarten and first grade they consistently took an active stance in figuring out the world of print. Within instructional contexts during the kindergarten year, the Independent Explorers voluntarily named and wrote letters, and identified sight words in their basal readiness program. They appeared to believe during this period that reading meant choosing from a personal set of known words and they accurately read workbook sentences where sight words were strung together. At the same time, these Independent

Explorers tried to read and make sense of all available written language within their classrooms.

The Independent Explorers tried to read names written on workbooks, decipher the print on various posters and displays around the rooms, and copy words from books and bulletin boards. For example while passing out the workbooks one day, Jimmy commented, "Hey, Jamie begins like my name!" And Maya, looking at the words on the chalkboard, became fascinated with rhyming patterns and tried to figure out how the words were alike. The preceeding lessons had focused on beginning sounds so Maya looked first at the beginnings of man, fan, and pan and then, shifting to the letters at the end, blurted out her discovery, "Look, they all gots 'an'!" This self-initiated exploration seemed to indicate intense curiosity about print and independent involvement with written language.

During first grade, the Independent Explorers continued their self-sponsored investigation of print within the contexts of round-robin reading and seatwork assignments. They read along while other children were reading and spontaneously offered correct words when the designated reader faltered. They eavesdropped on other reading groups and vicariously participated in their instruction. When the teacher, for example, asked another reading group how many vowels there were, Maya, across the room, silently held up five fingers while continuing to write on her own ditto sheet. During free time, these learners repeatedly chose to reread basal stories

and they surreptitiously experimented with sentences or words during written seatwork assignments. Instead of copying the required sight word sentences from the board, Audrey wrote original ones: I eight nathing for brafis. I eight taos for supper. On another day she used her free time after workbooks to sound out a list of sight words she already knew, thereby verifying for herself the sounding-out strategy she was developing.

As the Independent Explorers developed greater facility with reading, they moved from an overriding concern with accuracy and rigid over-application of phonic rules to more flexible reading strategies. While their initial hypothesis during this period seemed to be that reading primarily involved word-for-word accuracy, they subsequently adjusted this hypothesis according to reading context. In mid first grade the Independent Explorers were attempting to read trade books as well as their basal reader. When reading independently with a trade book, they moved to a contrasting range of strategies: assigning a global meaning to a page, retrieving meaning from pictures, making up nonsense words, saying close approximations for unknown words, and identifying known words correctly. Their hypotheses appeared to be that in this context reading could be simply "getting through the text" and that print and pictures could be sampled for meaning. Janet noted, after struggling to read a trade book, however, that "These must be second grade words."

By the end of first grade, the Independent Explorers were successful beginning readers, not only in terms of standardized reading achievement tests but also in terms of their teachers' assessments. Thus, the learners in this path were able to use successfully what they already knew about written language and to create opportunities for themselves to explore written language. They were adept at taking from instruction and moving beyond the curriculum in their sense-making and independent exploration.

The Curriculum Dependent Path

In contrast to the Independent Explorers, the Curriculum Dependent Learners were characterized by general inexperience with written language prior to formal schooling and a pattern of reliance upon school and its literacy curriculum for reading and writing experiences. While each path emerged from common behavioral and hypotheses patterns during the final analysis of field data, a look back at the Written Language Knowledge scores from the pretests revealed that these learners began kindergarten demonstrating little knowledge of written language. The task tapping knowledge of the intentionality of print most differentiated them from the Independent Explorers.

Across the kindergarten and first grade years, this path contained three prominent patterns of learner behavior; (a) misinterpretation of school tasks, (b) use of dysfunctional strategies for getting along in the classroom, and (c) dependence upon individual instruction.

Initially bewildered by literacy instruction in kindergarten and the beginning of first grade, the Curriculum Dependent Learners often misinterpreted classroom reading and writing tasks. There was a significant gap between whole-class instruction and the learner's knowledge, a gap which led to confusion and inappropriate responses. The children in this path, for example, appeared to hold an iconographic view of written language during kindergarten; that is, they perceived letters and numbers as individual icons, or pictures, and believed that learning to read and write in the classroom was a function of "taking a picture" in order to recall a particular image. They considered print globally, not yet differentiating between letters and numbers, letters and sounds, or letters and words. In kindergarten, while these learners began to recognize the intentionality of print, the curriculum focused on letter/sound correspondences. Early in first grade, while these learners began to recognize that written language was a systematic code and identified words as separate units, the curriculum stressed sounding-out strategies and alphabetizing. As the gap between learner understanding and curriculum widened, the pattern of bewilderment about reading and writing seemed to increase.

Dysfunctional strategies for coping with instruction seemed to arise from this gap. In the kindergarten site where books and writing materials were available during free choice periods, Eric wandered around the room, moving from activity to activity, picking up books and putting them back, handling paper, talking to other

children, and rarely looking at print. He appeared to not know how to proceed even though others were engaging in literate activities. During small group phonics recitation in a different kindergarten classroom, Rodney developed a strategy of random guessing, often giving letter names when asked for letter sounds or choosing every word in a list rather than making appropriate discriminations between words. He responded "k" when asked what sound 'm' made and, when the children were asked to raise their hands for each pair of words with the same beginning sounds, Rodney raised his hand for every individual word.

The Curriculum Dependendent Learners marked workbook answers randomly and copied freely from their nearest neighbor whenever possible. Unable to make sense of their assigned work, they replicated the configuration of marks on the nearest child's page. Eric, in fact, responded to the researcher's query about his paper by pointing to the other children's papers, as if to say, "I'm doing whatever is on their papers!"

When the class engaged in choral reading, the Curriculum Dependent Learners went through the motions, mouthing words and shadowing other children's rote responses. While these paralinguistic behaviors could have been productive, they rarely were accompanied with print engagement and thus often were dysfunctional in terms of reading and writing growth. In mid-first grade, these learners participated by guessing at words during round-robin reading. Their working hypothesis seemed to be that

unknown words could be guessed by looking at the first letter and calling out several possible words with the same beginning, e.g. cat? call? car? Their attention was directed toward guessing without regard for sentence or story meaning. Rodney, for example, combined this word guessing strategy with his bank of known words and attempted to read the text The bird is blue. He began, "It, the? bear? Chip?". The teacher provided the word bird, then Rodney continued, "the? (long pause) is?" and the teacher provided blue.

Unable to make sense of group instruction, the Curriculum Dependent Learners learned to create moments when the teacher talked just to them. Eric became particularly adept at getting the teacher to explain individually what he was "pose-a-do." He often interrupted another reading group by walking over and holding up his blank workbook page as evidence of his need for an explanation. He also learned that a total refusal to work in first grade landed him in an after-school private session with the teacher--the desired "school for one."

Wanda also responded to teacher assistance. In her classroom across town, the instructional program was conducted predominantly at the whole group level and her teacher was particularly adept at carrying the least proficient learners along. She provided sufficient scaffolding to allow all learners to follow the lesson, and her explanations encouraged Wanda to move from merely going through the motions of reading to actually monitoring the print on the page.

Rodney, in quite a different classroom environment, floundered as the year proceeded. His initial willingness to guess randomly gave way to frustration, and he gradually began mumbling and talking to himself as well as mimicking others. Rodney also began avoiding his schoolwork and was sent to the corner or to the principal's office for non-participation or for acting out. He spent significant portions of his instructional time being punished and, by the end of first grade, began to groan when confronted with a whole page of new text.

In contrast to the Independent Explorers who were able to make opportunities for literacy learning and take from skills-based instruction, the Curriculum Dependent Learners were less fortunate. They were caught between two entities (a) the predetermined curriculum which proceeded as a fixed entity according to careful district-wide coordination, and (b) their lack of understanding and inexperience with the world of print. Thus, they learned with difficulty and concluded, for the most part, that reading and writing were largely arbitrary and abstract processes and that school necessitated finding ways to "get by."

This pattern was particularly evident throughout the last half of first grade and was demonstrated clearly during an informal sampling of reading by these learners. Toward the end of first grade the researchers asked children to read from an I Can Read book and retell the story. We had sampled extensive reading from the basal but had gathered few accounts of reading from trade

books. We wondered how focal learners would fare in texts beyond the restricted language of their readers. Eric responded by reading only the isolated words he knew and omitting the others. He read, " In ..and ..is.." then turned the page and continued, "the ..and ..at." When asked about the story, he repeated, "In .. and ..is."

This behavior was, for the most part, typical of learners in this path. Further, standardized test scores and performance on written language tasks at the end of first grade documented that these learners were the least successful within this sample of inner-city children.

The Passive Non-Weaver Path

The Passive Non-Weaver Path captured the behaviors of children who invested their energy and cognitive attention in doing what school required but with little attempt at making sense of it. Though appearing to be relatively on-task during instruction, they failed to draw generalizations about the processes of reading and writing and make it their own. They were, for the most part, non-weavers of the cloth of literacy. Instructional tasks from their perspective were relatively meaningless, and they carried out their "paper work" without relating the skill being drilled to a larger picture of reading and writing as processes. Unlike the Curriculum Dependent Learners, who were inexperienced in written language at the beginning of kindergarten, the learners in this path were more knowledgeable. They had average and above average scores within

this sample on written language tasks, yet their path led to declining success in terms of learning to read and write in the early grades.

Three aspects of this path were prominent in terms of learner behavior and belief: (a) passivity or lack of active involvement with literacy instruction; (b) failure at weaving literacy concepts together; and (c) presence of a recurring pattern of sustaining support from home.

The Passive Non-Weavers were minimally engaged in terms of attention during reading and writing lessons. They vaguely monitored lessons for times requiring their participation and generally daydreamed or looked distracted. Jamie sucked the neckband of his tee shirt while his eyes indicated far away thoughts. Mary Ann played dreamily with her pony tail, and Bobby, complying with the rigid standards of his classroom, sat properly still. His lack of response to teacher questions, however, betrayed his inattention, as did his quiet foot tapping and occasional subvocalizing of an invented rap!

In contrast to the sometimes disruptive behavior of their Curriculum Dependent counterparts, these children clearly intended to go along with the business of the classroom. They echoed the class in detached, absent-minded fashion during choral reading, occasionally with the text upside down, and nearly always provided an answer, however inappropriate, when called upon.

Unlike the Independent Explorers, these children waited until the curriculum presented them with words to learn before they exerted effort. They were rarely observed either trying to read the print in their environment or engaging in self-sponsored writing events, at least during the hours spent in school.

During seatwork which consisted of cut-and-paste activities with dittos and fill-in-the-blank exercises in workbooks, these children demonstrated their "it's meaningless work and I'll just get it done as such" approach to the literacy curriculum. Bobby, when asked how he knew to put either an 'o' or a 'u' into the blanks on a ditto drilling these short vowel sounds, responded with a series of drawn out guttural sounds in an attempt to mimic the "sounds" demonstrated by his teacher. When asked how making those sounds (which did not produce any reliable phoneme/grapheme correspondence) helped him with his work, he merely shrugged. When pressed about how he knew whether he was right or wrong, he responded that his teacher told him when it was right, and if she failed to do so, he didn't care. In a similar manner, Mary Ann would often chat with her neighbor about how they were "doing their work." One day, while completing a worksheet about letters and beginning sounds, she turned to her neighbor and commented, "I'm pasting my fox next to the 'b'; where are you pasting yours?" To this the neighbor replied that the 'fox' was a 'wolf' so it belonged with the 'w'. Mary Ann simply returned to her 'busy work' and continued her focus on the cutting and pasting aspect of the

activity rather than the literacy-related concept.

During round-robin reading, these learners seemed to believe that reading was a process of saying only the words that they could recognize. They stopped cold when coming to an unknown word and waited for assistance. Their strategy was "say the words you know and wait for the ones you don't." They refused to read texts other than their basals, explaining that they didn't know what the new books were about.

In terms of achievement, their progress was mixed, as indicated by two contrasting sources of data. The first was the Total Written Language Knowledge scores for these children at the end of first grade which remained in the average or above average range for this sample. The second was the achievement scores on standardized tests which dropped between the end of kindergarten and the end of first grade.

One explanation for the sustained written language scores seemed to be the presence in each of these learner's lives of a significant other who engaged in supportive activities. In fact, these children were termed "the life vest kids" by the research team since the children's outside collaborators appeared to keep them "afloat."

Jamie's grandmother, for example, served as her grandson's ambassador through daily visits to school. Her enthusiastic conversations were welcomed, and she always was treated as an insider. Mary Ann was observed at home happily pulling out a bag

of books, looking at some independently, and settling down with her mother to read. As they sat closely, giggled, and pointed to words while taking turns, it was clear that experiences at home preserved her interest in books. Bobby's mother was diligent in getting her son to school on time, scrubbed and neat with homework finished. She made a point of speaking with his teacher almost every day and with the principal regularly. Bobby was well-behaved in school, and his teachers perceived him to be one of the top students, though his scores indicated otherwise. Clearly, each learner in this path was sustained and supported in school by these patterns of assistance.

The declining achievement test scores (with due acknowledgement of the narrow scope of these tests) may perhaps have been the first indicators of the fragmented, incomplete nature of literacy knowledge attained by these learners. Despite their entering written language schemata, these children were not pulling concepts together and learning to read and write in school. Rather, relying in large part on the curriculum and making few connections on their own, these word-bound and relatively indifferent learners appeared to be engaging in activities which were bounded by the edges of the ditto page and unrelated to any larger function in their lives. Failing to bring a larger understanding about written language to bear on school literacy activities or to realize their role as active participants in literacy learning, these learners appeared to expect school to

teach them while they passively waited.

The Deferring Learner Path

One final case seemed to stand alone in this array of learning paths. Ellen, the highest achieving learner on the kindergarten Metropolitan Achievement Test and one of the highest on the sample of entering written language knowledge, differed from the others in her sense-making patterns. Like the Independent Explorers, Ellen spent much of her kindergarten year making opportunities for herself to learn. She constructed books from the array of paper in her classroom and filled them with invented spellings. She copied print from books and enthusiastically participated in reading lessons at home where she and her older sister played school and made their own flash cards. By the end of kindergarten she was frequently observed pretending to read, and was successful within the school curriculum at recognizing all of the letters and their sounds, recognizing an array of sight words and using phoneme/grapheme relationships as a clue to the beginning sounds of unknown words.

In first grade, however, the path changed. Ellen seemed unable to reconcile her own written language knowledge with the concepts she met in the skills-based curriculum and she became less of a risk-taker. She struggled with sight word sentences on the board that read:

Will	Not	Can
I will go.	I will not.	I can run.

The above were intended to be read as a listing of sight words and accompanying sentences, but Ellen read each sentence as a total unit and tried different intonational patterns to make each sentence sound plausible. She struggled with phonics rules and appeared not to be successful in seatwork assignments. For example, in one lesson she attempted to copy specific words conforming to the long vowel rules she was learning. The intended lesson focused on two rules, two vowels together making the "long" sound of the first vowel and the "silent e" rule. As instructed, Ellen searched in her basal for words conforming to these rules but found mainly exceptions. Saying the words from her basal "said.. come..," she looked again at the chalkboard list of "model" words and then wrote and erased the words she had found. This and other similar lessons seemed to undercut her confidence and she grew hesitant during class recitations.

The primary skill emphasis in mid-first grade was sounding out new words. Ellen at this time began a pattern of deferring to others. She paused just long enough during round robin reading for others to supply unknown words, she copied words from the board but no longer read them, and, unlike the Independent Explorers, did not move toward flexibility but rather in the opposite direction toward rigid rule following. Close observation of Ellen found her doing exactly what she was told, sounding out words (e.g., /we:rr/ for 'write') but not being successful, and thus taking fewer and fewer risks. She grew quieter and at the end of first grade seemed

to lose confidence in her own ability to figure out the system. Because she began at the top of the stack, she was not seen as a learner in trouble. Ellen was viewed as successful but lazy by her teacher, and her declining test scores still placed her well above many other learners in the study. Table 5 presents her declining scores over the two year period.

Insert Table 5 About Here

In summary, the four learning paths demonstrated that reading and writing instruction was interpreted differently by the learners themselves. Learners made sense of the skills-based curriculum in differing ways depending not only upon their entering written language knowledge but also their various transactive stances as learners and their beliefs about reading and writing. Table 6 summarizes the dimensions along which these paths differed and incorporates entering-kindergarten and end-of-first-grade knowledge assessments.

Insert Table 6 About Here

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to explore both success and failure among children from low-SES communities at learning to read and write in traditional skills-based classrooms through an analysis

of learner interpretations of literacy instruction. Using a transactional theory of language learning as our lens, we followed the children through two years of beginning literacy instruction, noting their ways of making sense of reading and writing within the context of traditional, skills-based classrooms. The results indicate a subtle interplay of factors which seems to account for degree of early literacy success. These factors include degree and type of knowledge about written language brought to beginning literacy instruction, transactive stances of individual children, degree of home support, and fit between learner knowledge and the literacy curriculum.

The results of the Written Language Knowledge pretests clearly indicate that, overall, the children who were the most successful at reading and writing at the end of first grade began kindergarten with more highly and broadly developed schemata about written language as compared to the children who were the least successful. In particular, the test of knowledge of the semiotic nature and functions of print (Intentionality Task) clearly differentiated between the successful and less successful children. The successful children, when asked about a sample of print and what it could be for, indicated through their responses an awareness of the "big picture" for written language -- that print serves a linguistic communicative role across several real world functions. These children had experienced and acknowledged print in books, on signs, on games, and so on. They knew that the little marks on the

paper signified -- carried meaning -- and that meaning was coded linguistically rather than ideographically.

The less successful children, on the other hand, indicated that the marks on the paper were just that and no more -- these were marks to be learned in school. They did not express any awareness of the semiotic nature of the marks nor of the linguistic nature of them. The children in this group did not express awareness through their responses that print functioned in different ways in the world outside the classroom. In other words, they did not appear to have the "big picture" for written language. They were beginning formal literacy instruction without appearing to understand implicitly why they were learning about these marks.

Interestingly, the results of the pretests which tapped the "innerworkings" (Dyson, 1982) about print, e.g. Concepts About Print, Alphabetic Principle, and Concepts of Writing, did not differentiate as clearly between the successful and less successful children. Overall, these relatively low scores for all three groups could very well have reflected a certain level of experience with learning to copy and print their names -- a common beginning-of-the-year activity and one which all of the children had experienced before the onset of the study. The low score levels suggest that experience with encoding and decoding print was probably limited to such an activity.

The level of active involvement in the construction of personal knowledge was the pattern that emerged the most clearly,

however, during analysis. From the beginning of the study, it was clear that some children were following their own agendas in figuring out the world of written language. It was equally clear that other children appeared to expect this knowledge to be given to them in the carefully premeasured, timed doses of the reading/writing curriculum of their classrooms. The children who did not wait for the curriculum used every available source of information -- whether it be bulletin boards, notes to parents, print on clothing, or print on lunchboxes -- to experiment with reading and writing.

The fact that these children who were actively constructing their own knowledge about print were also those who began school with a clear grasp of the big picture of written language suggests that it is this big picture which enables the children to make sense of different pieces of information on their own. Our observations and analysis of the data lead us to agree with this conclusion for the most part. This would help explain the positive relationship over the years between experiences with print during the preschool years and success at school literacy for all children in all economic classes.

This study as well as the investigation by Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines' (1988) makes clear that the operative factor is the <u>experience</u> with written language and not social/economic class. Meyer, et al. (1989) also studied low SES children learning to read and documented a significant relationship between entering scores

on the WRAT and end-of-the-year scores. All of the children in the present study came from economically distressed homes and neighborhoods. Some of them indicated through the array of Written Language Knowledge tasks more experience with print than others, and this group of children were clearly more successful in school. They were better able to make sense of the instruction which during kindergarten and first grade dealt with relatively abstract pieces of the written language system in the form of isolated letters and sounds and sight words. While we observed those children with perceptions of written language as a system of arbitrary marks to be "learned in school" lag further and further behind the curriculum, these children with a sense of the whole could interpret this instruction as it was intended and use it in their personal transactions with their environment as they constructed knowledge.

As important as this entering knowledge appears to be, though, it is not sufficient to guarantee success at school literacy. This was made clear to us by the case of Ellen who, although beginning with a great deal of prior knowledge about print as ascertained through test scores and observation in kindergarten, changed her transactive stance in first grade to one of deferring, following the curriculum to the letter and turning away from independent sense-making about reading and writing. Rather than actively integrating her instruction with her own knowledge, she attempted to learn only from the curriculum, i.e. to wait for the curriculum

to teach her how the system works. Ultimately, she lost confidence in her knowledge and, in effect, sabotaged the intent of the curriculum which relies upon the learner to integrate new information with old and thereby reorganize knowledge. While some may argue that this path taken by Ellen reflects an exception rather than a pattern, we suggest that this path may be quite common among young learners. The fact that we identified only one child among our focal children who demonstrated this pattern of behaviors may reflect only the random selection of the sample. Our inclusion of this path rests on the tradition among qualitative researchers of close observation of single cases as suggestive instances of more widely occurring patterns (Bissex, 1980; Dyson, 1984).

Thus, the transactional description of successful and less successful patterns of literacy learning appears complex. Self-directed cognitive activity seems to be one of the keys to successful interpretation of skills-based, school literacy instruction. Cognitive compliancy, on the other hand, appears to lead to increasing failure to benefit from instruction and lack of success at reading and writing as indicated by test scores and teacher judgment. Self-direction and independence appear to be facilitated by higher levels of prior knowledge while lack of knowledge leads to apparent compliance and dependence if the gap between instruction and personal understanding is too great. As indicated by the learners who took the Passive Non Weaver Path,

though, a passive, non-involved stance can overcome to a degree personal knowledge and lead toward relative failure at school literacy tasks.

Implications

One can derive from the results of this study several clear implications for ways in which instruction can better facilitate successful literacy learning for children from low-SES communities. First, policy makers, curriculum developers, textbook developers, and teachers must change their view of what constitutes beginning reading and writing. As the research into emergent literacy has made evident (Sulzby, 1985b; Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1989; Teale, 1986), literacy learning begins through many experiences with written language in the context of meaningful, functional literacy events. As the big picture of written language evolves conceptually so do understandings of the pieces of the system and the role each plays in the whole (Dyson, 1982). Learning to read and write does not begin with learning letter names, sounds, etc. and children have difficulty learning these pieces without a larger picture of the entire system. If children have not had the opportunity to explore the whole of written language in meaningful, functional literacy events then instruction must provide this opportunity. Otherwise, we are asking these children, from a phenomenological perspective, to learn the fine points of a process of which they have little or no understanding. This is not possible for any learner of any age.

Secondly, as the study progressed we were consistently impressed with the ability of the children to use any input, no matter how restricted, to aid in their construction of knowledge about reading and writing. The classrooms we observed were not the literate environments described in much of the research (Bussis, et al., 1985; Allen, 1989). The walls contained relatively little print which served functional, child-centered purposes. Trade books were either absent, hidden in a closet, or available only on a limited basis. The hallways of the schools were relatively barren of meaningful print. Yet, those children who were actively engaged in figuring out print used any instances they could find. They read faded notices to the custodians as well as labels on homework charts. In the absence of trade books, they reread their basals whenever possible (depending upon the structure of the classroom). Surely this argues for facilitating this self-sponsored seeking by making each classroom "print rich" with varied, meaningful, and functional written language. We join with Martinez, Cheyney, McBroom, Hemmeter, and Teale (1989) in calling for classroom environments for low-SES children which surround the children with language and print and which provide authentic opportunities to engage in literate activity.

Thirdly, the relationship between success at learning to read and write and transactive style surely argues for the creation of learning environments which encourage and enable active learning on the part of the students. Teachers need to encourage and push

students to construct their own meanings -- to transact with the instruction and environment as they learn to read and write. Curricula and classroom environments which either state directly or imply that the student must passively wait for enlightenment run the risk of learners taking them at their word --and thus failing to construct the big picture within which the small pieces will make sense.

Another aspect of the results is in congruence with previous observations on the facilitative role of home support for children from low-SES homes. Chall and Snow (1988) in their study of high-achieving, low-income children noted that children across the grades made greater gains when parents and teachers communicated regularly about the children and their progress and when parents intervened at home with academic assistance. Our experience with the children in the Passive Non Weaver Path confirms that outside support prevented these children from failing outright in early literacy learning. Schools in low-SES communities need to heed these findings and begin to institute policies and programs which enable and encourage the families of these children to become meaningfully involved in their day-to-day school lives.

Finally, the importance of providing specific instruction to an individual child's level of conceptual development was underscored by the observational results of this study. Most of the children in the Curriculum Dependent Path began to make progress only after receiving individual instruction. Goldenberg

(1989) noted a similar phenomenon in his study of low-SES children. Commenting on why some succeeded and others failed, he observed, "Someone--either a teacher or a parent or both--did something somewhat out of the ordinary, something that had an academic focus and that eventually led to the child's better-than-expected reading achievement" (pg. 51). The one child in our Curriculum Dependent Path who did not eventually begin to make progress did not receive individual academic attention. Rather, the teacher dealt with his confusion and resulting behavior problems by sending him from the room and suspending him from school. Cut off from any access to the skill he was struggling with, he ended the year a dejected and rejected child--a type familiar to many who work with low-SES children.

Research is needed to further explore the observational results of this study. Much of what emerged from the analysis may very well cut across income and social levels. It is likely that successful children are the active learners no matter what the socioeconomic level of the family. It may also be that more low-SES children assume a passive stance toward literacy learning in school than middle-class children. The interaction of entering knowledge with transactive stance may also look different for middle-class children. And, the interaction between the literacy curriculum and learner sense-making may be different in other instructional approaches. We do not know, for example, whether these learners would have been more or less successful in a

contrasting instructional program.

All of these issues are promising areas for future research. Informed, responsible research must continue for the sake of millions of children whose very lives depend upon the opportunities which full literacy will make possible. As one inner-city grandmother declared, "My baby must learn to read! If she don't she'll spend the rest of her life cleaning other people's houses, and that's not what I have in mind for her!"

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Table 1

Characteristics of Reading and Writing Instruction Across Sites

	Site		
Grade	A	B	C
Kindergarten	Basal reading readiness prog. Free choice periods with literacy materials Ability groups	Synthetic phonics Formal skill drills Storybook reading w. teacher	Basal reading readiness prog. Phonics dittos Storybook sessions with teacher
First Grade	Basal skills development program Dittos and workbooks Round robin reading Teacher demonstrations of reading	Basal skills development program Extensive ditto sheets Whole group instruction Teacher scaffolding	Basal skills development program Extensive ditto sheets Round robin reading Trade books available

Table 2

Quantitative Results of Measures of Literacy Knowledge of Low SES Children

	Written Language Knowledge (X)		Standard Achievement Measures (X)	
WL Knowledge	Pre	Post	End of K	End of 1st
Intent.	2.95	4.55	---	---
(1-5)	SD=1.70	SD=1.05		
St. Struc.	3.47	5.30	---	---
(0-8)	SD=1.47	SD=1.69		
Wrtn. Reg.	3.26	3.30	---	---
(Stanines)	SD=1.45	SD=1.34		
Alph. Prin.	1.28	2.85	---	---
(1-3)	SD= .36	SD= .33		
Con. Print	3.16	5.05	---	---
(Stanines)	SD=1.15	SD=1.91		
Con. Writ.	3.68	5.54	---	---
(1-6)	SD=1.72	SD=1.14		
Total WL Know.	17.95	26.95	---	---
(5-40)	SD=4.42	SD=6.28		
Metropolitan	---	---	4.95	
(Stanines)			SD=2.46	
CAT	---	---		41.80
(Percentiles)				SD=26.83

Table 3

Pretest Scores (X) For Each Path

Test	Group			
	Independent Explorers (CAT=83%ile)	Curriculum Dependent (CAT=17%ile)	Passive Nonweavers (CAT=42%ile)	Deferring Learner (CAT=34%ile)
Intentionality (1-5)	4.2	1.6	3.7	5
Concepts/Print (Stanines)	4.2	2.8	3.0	4
Alphab. Princpl (1-3)	1.5	1.1	1.2	1.7
Story Structure (1-8)	5.2	3.2	3.3	3
Written Registr (Stanines)	3.4	3.9	4.4	4
Concepts/Writng (1-6)	3.8	3.9	4.4	1
Total Written Language (5-40)	22.2	15.6	19.6	18.7

Table 4

Path Membership by Site

Independent Explorer Path		Curriculum Dependent Path		Passive Non Weaver Path		Deferring Learner Path	
Learner	Year	Learner	Year	Learner	Year	Learner	Year
Maya	K	Eric	K	Jamie	K	Ellen	K
Site A	1st	Site A	1st	Site A	1st	Site A	1st
Letitia	K	Tonya	K	Bobby	K		
Site B	-	Site B	-	Site B	1st		
Janet	K	Larry	K	Mary Ann	K		
Site B	1st	Site B	-	Site C	1st		
Audrey	K	Wanda	K				
Site C	1st	Site B	1st				
Jimmy	K	Rodney	K				
Site C	-	Site C	1st				

Table 5

Declining Achievement Scores of Deferring Learner

Total Written Language Score (Early	Metropolitan Achievement Test Reading (End of K)	California Achievement Test Total Rdg. (End of 1st)	Total Written Language Score (Late Ist Grade)
$\bar{X}$ = 17.95	Stanine	Percentile	$\bar{X}$ = 26.95
18.7	9	34	24

Table 6

Relationships Between Path Membership and Quantitative Measures

Path	Level of Entering Knowledge in Relation to Sample	Characteristics of Path	Success on CAT Reading End of 1st
Independent Explorer Path	high	-Extensive literacy knowledge -Self-sponsored exploration -Flexible reading strategies	high
Curriculum Dependent Path	low	-Misinterpret school tasks -Dysfunctional strategies -Dependence on individual instruction	low
Passive Non Weaver Path	average	-Passive response to literacy instruction -Failure in weaving literacy concepts	average

(Table 6 Cont.)

		together -Home support	
Deferring Learner Path	high/ average	-Initial independent exploration -Difficulty with skills lessons -Deferring to curriculum and other learners	low/ average

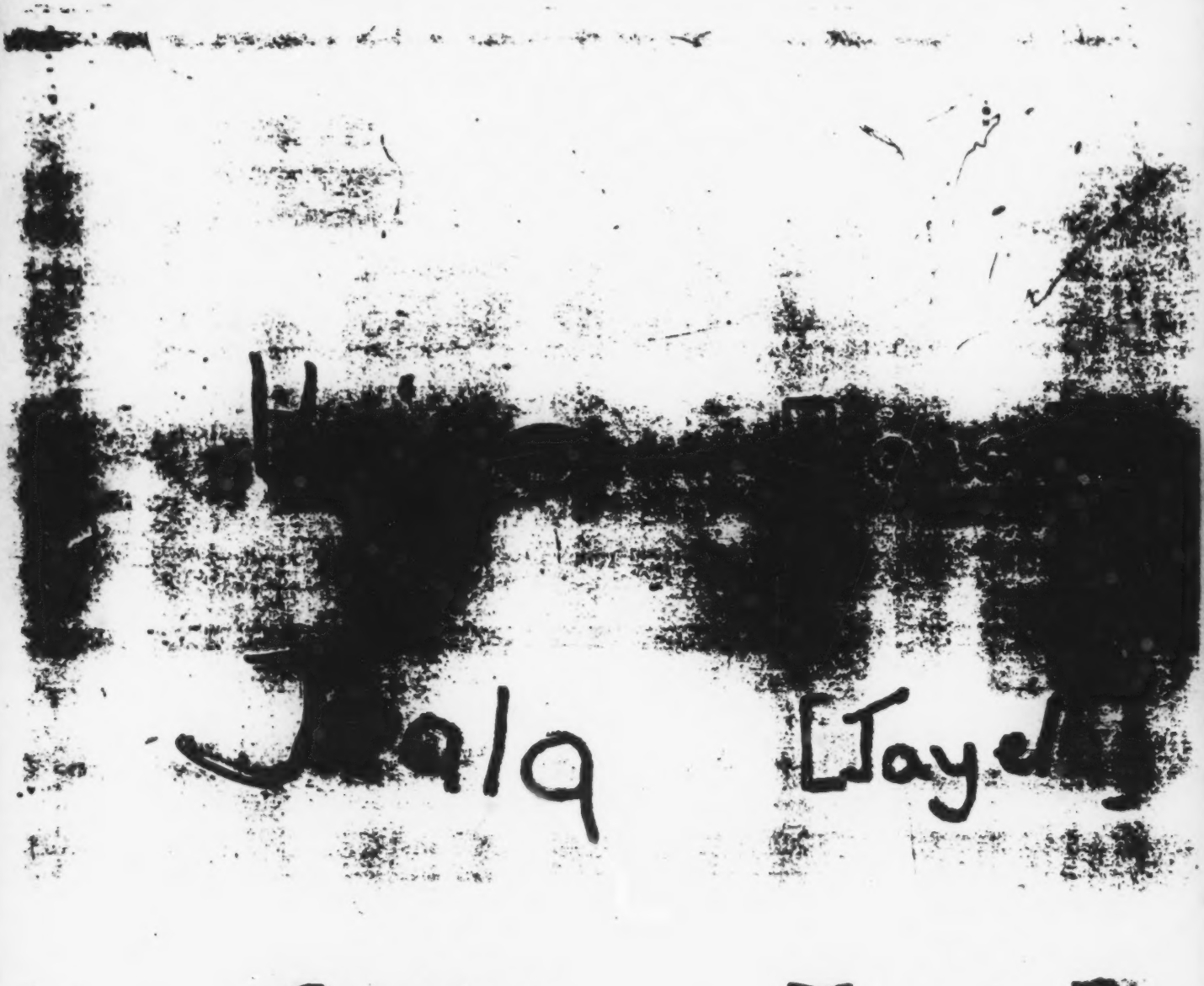
Jala [Jayd
Cale. [Carla

Figure Caption

Figure 1. Maya's response to the request to "write your name and anything else you can" during the initial administration of the Written Language Knowledge Tasks, indicating a grasp of the Alphabetic Principle.